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Tempo Interviews Dean Edward Kocher

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TEMPO INTERVIEWS DEAN EDWARD KOCHER

In this interview Dean Edward Kocher offers some thoughts on the Mary Pappert School of Music's future and addresses a perennial music education question—what knowledge and skills are most important and why?

In your opinion, what are the hallmarks of the best music education?

I earned a baccalaureate degree in music education 40 years ago, and that learning experience not only launched my career, it inspired a habit of lifelong learning as well as the ability to anticipate and respond to change. For me, a challenging liberal arts education, exceptional applied music lessons, a thorough grounding in musicianship, relevant ensemble experiences and high quality specialized courses in music education have stood the test of time and then some.

In talking with people from my generation as well as younger musicians who are alumni, there is no doubt that a music degree from Duquesne has been invaluable for generations of professional musicians. We believe that's because we have provided those same foundational elements—a challenging liberal arts curriculum, high quality applied music courses, formative ensemble experiences, rigorous musicianship requirements and superior specialized courses in the major.

How would you describe the Music School right now?

At present, we are experiencing many positive trends. In particular, we enjoy a robust enrollment of talented, intelligent and motivated students. We're attracting that type of student because we can offer diverse baccalaureate degree programs along with graduate programs that include online options. The University enthusiastically supports our programs, and graduates and friends of the school are stepping forward in helpful ways to ensure that we continue to thrive in the years ahead.

Much credit for our successes belongs to the members of the faculty, who are energetically devoted to giving our students a high quality education. This year in *Tempo*, we honor the leadership and superior music making of a number of faculty members, including Professors Christine Jordanoft and Robert Cameron, each of whom is celebrating a 25-year anniversary.

We also have a support staff that well deserves our thanks for their professionalism. I am honored to serve as a visiting accreditation evaluator and a commissioner for accreditation for the National Association of Schools of Music, and in the role of visiting evaluator, I have been to dozens of campuses throughout the nation. Although I'm prohibited from disclosing information about other programs, I can



speak with unbridled enthusiasm about the Mary Pappert School of Music. For the record, the support staff at our school functions at a level of excellence and dedication that is unsurpassed.

I should also point out that good things are happening here because of teamwork. The newly dedicated Dr. Thomas D. Pappert Center for Performance and Innovation is a superb example of vision, cooperation, collaboration and hard work from our donors, the University administration, the music technology faculty, our support staff and the students. In the Pappert Center we now have superb technological capabilities that will allow us to excel in new ways, which points toward our very promising future.

Can you offer some thoughts on the future of the Music School?

Because we know that young children are continuing to study music, we feel optimism about the future of the Music School. Our campus-based programs for youth, the Children's Festival Chorus and City Music Center, are enjoying strong enrollments. It also appears that music education remains important in schools in our region and beyond, so there is every reason to think that interest in music as a career choice will continue, too.

That being said, we feel how deeply the international financial crisis has affected families. Everyone in higher education is concerned that tuition and other cost increases are felt even more deeply because of diminished family financial resources. In the coming years, we hope to be able to reduce student loan liabilities, which will be

an important factor in appealing to prospective students.

Despite those challenges, the quality of our faculty assures me that we will thrive in the future. During the past decade we have heard members of the faculty in scintillating performances of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas, the complete instrumental chamber music of Johannes Brahms, French chamber music par excellence and a number of stunning jazz performances. Our ensembles are also making their mark. The choral organizations perform well-attended outreach concerts at St. Paul Cathedral and St. Mary's of the Mount, and all of the large ensembles regularly give superb performances on campus as well as at regional, national and international venues.

Our primary curricular challenge remains the same as it has always been: to help students gain the

knowledge and abilities to enter, function and mature in a dynamically evolving field. In a sense, this means that we must prepare students to be ready for challenges that cannot be fully anticipated. A well educated musician will have knowledge of liberal arts, performance, musicianship and a specialized major area in depth. With that foundation in mind it is easier to understand what long term attributes are most worthwhile for a young musician—critical thinking, problem solving, communication and teamwork. These are skills that make creativity and innovation possible. At Duquesne, as we serve God by serving students, we are working diligently to create powerful learning experiences that cultivate and foster lifetime learning and passionate music making. ●

SUPPORT THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The Mary Pappert School of Music offers many opportunities for your generosity to make a real difference for the next generation of great musicians:

- Deans Discretionary Fund
- Music Performance Fund
- Music Education Fund
- Music Technology Fund
- Music Therapy Fund
- Sacred Music Fund
- Music Composition Fund
- Music Scholarship Fund
- Music School Endowment
- Nicholas Jordanoff Jazz Trumpet Scholarship

Nicholas Jordanoff Jazz Trumpet Scholarship

Throughout his long career at Duquesne, former Director of Music Admissions Nicholas Jordanoff helped generations of students achieve their dreams, befriended countless alumni and on a daily basis inspired the staff. For these reasons we have instituted the Nicholas Jordanoff Jazz Trumpet Scholarship. Nick spent most of his career helping deserving students obtain scholarships, and to have a scholarship named for him, designated for the instrument he loved to play, is a fitting tribute.

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